Travails of Hindu Afghan Refugees in Germany

2367. SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Will the Minister EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to State:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in Hindustan Times dated December 3, 1999 about the Travails of Hindu Afghan refugees in Germany;

(b) whether they are prevented from coming to India because they are not given visas;

(c) if so, why visas are being denied to them?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Government is aware of the news item which appeared in Hindustan Times on December 3, 1999 about Hindu Afghan refugees in Germany.

(b) and (c) There is no discrimination in Government policy towards Afghan refugees in third countries wishing to visit India. In accordance with the appropriate regulations of the Govenrment of India, foreigners wishing to visit India can normally obtain visas from the Indian Mission/Post in the area where they reside.

Passport Offices in the country

2368. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to State:

(a) total number of Passport Ofices opened in the country during the last three years with specific reference to Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) total number of Passport Offices proposed to be opened in the country during the Ninth Plan Period, State-wise, separately, togetherwith the financial allocation made therefore?